



# GENERATIONS AT WORK

*An Interactive Workshop Designed to Bridge the Generational Divide in the Workplace and Maximize Employee Productivity*

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Office of Human Resources Management

# Questions You May Be Asking...

- Why am I here?
- What will I learn?
- How will this session help me in my job?
- What will be expected of me as a next step?



# Today you will ...

- Learn the characteristics of the four generations currently in the workplace
- Identify “truths and myths” about each of the four generations
- Learn how to improve work team communication through understanding cross-cultural communication
- Identify mechanisms and strategies on how to motivate individuals from different generations and create more productivity and/or reduce conflict

# To Begin...

*“...The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, they show disrespect for adults and love to talk rather than work or exercise. They no longer rise when adults enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter in front of company, gobble down their food at the table and intimidate their teachers...”*

**Socrates 5th Century B.C.**

# WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT

## Generation as a Cultural Lens

Veterans/Traditionalists

Baby Boomers

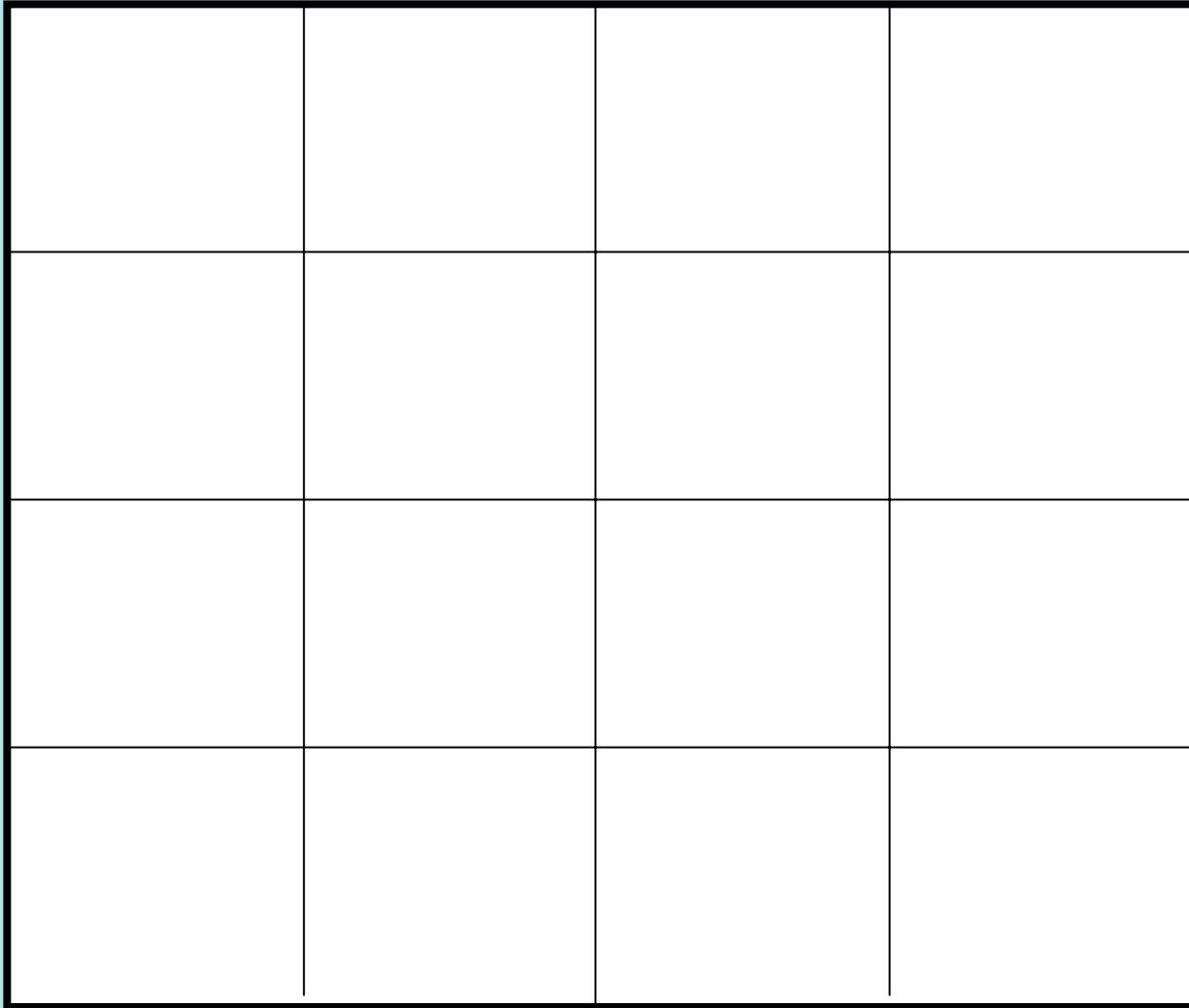
Generation X

Echo Boomers (Generation Y/Nexters)

# WHAT DO YOU SEE?



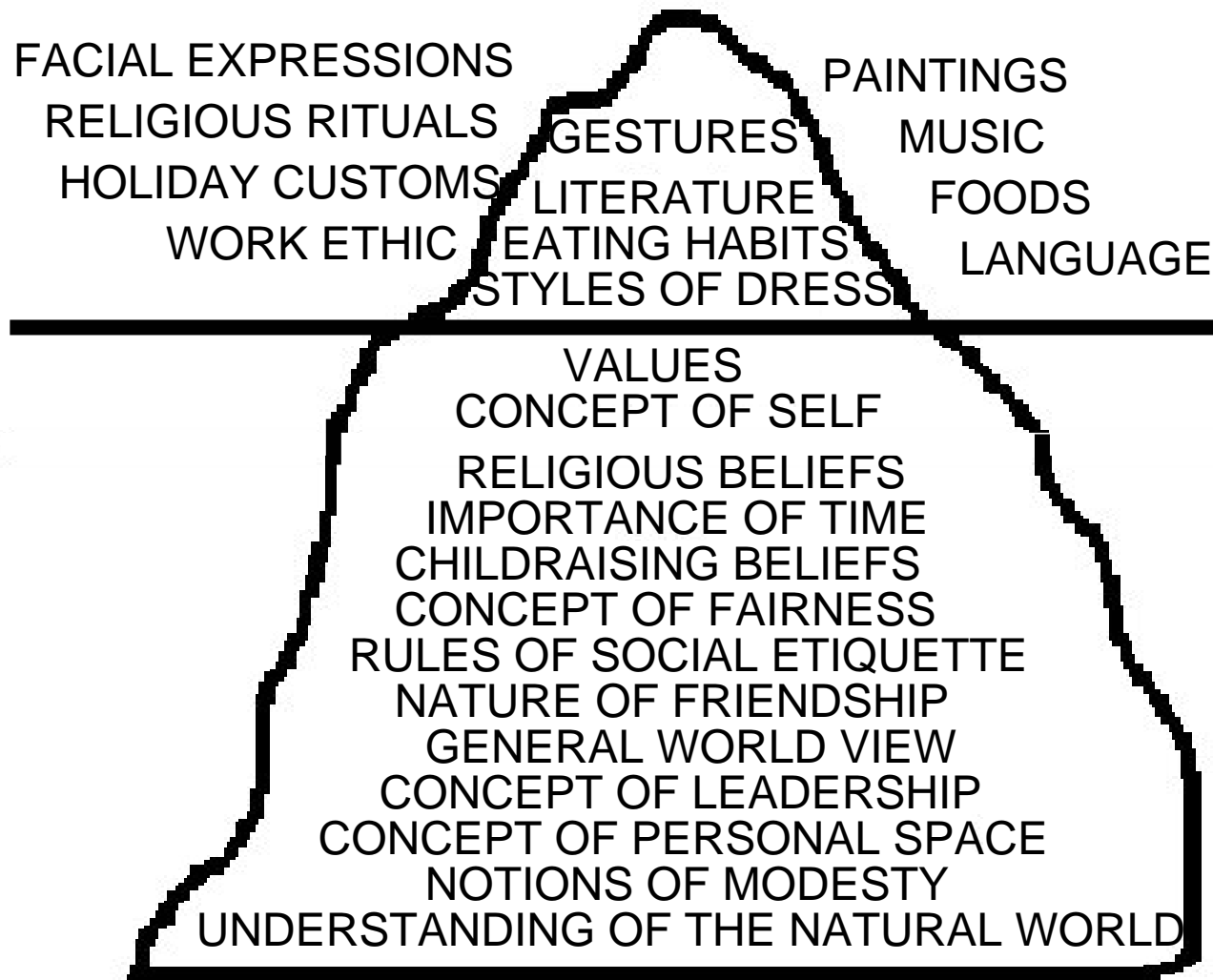
# IDENTIFY THE NUMBER OF SQUARES?



**“WE DON’T SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE...  
WE SEE THINGS AS WE ARE.” - ANAÏS NIN**

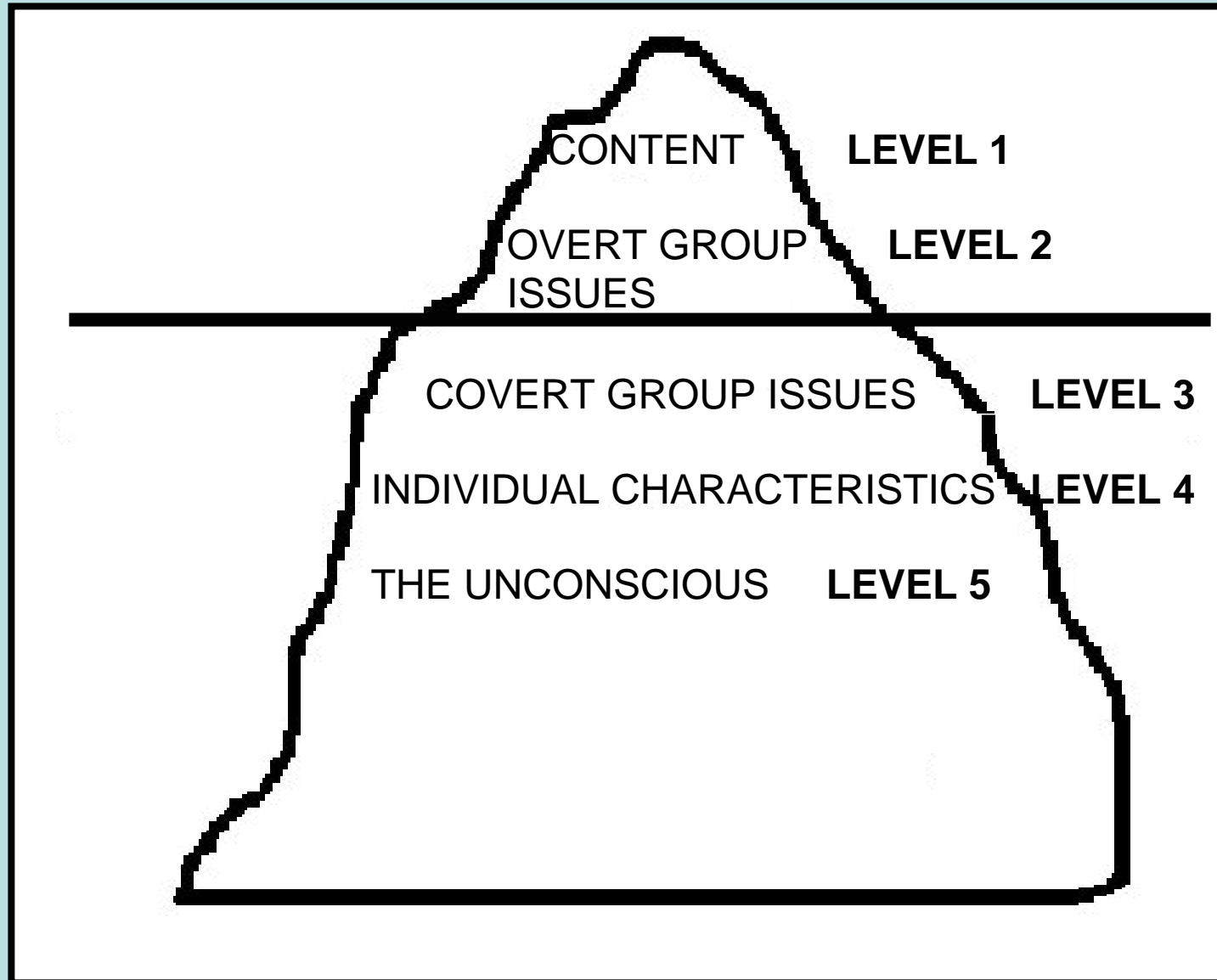
# CULTURE: IT'S LIKE AN ICEBERG

**Only 10-15% of an iceberg is visible to the naked eye**



# ORGANIZATIONS: THEY'RE LIKE ICEBERGS

**Only 10-15% of an organization is visible to the naked eye**



# GENERATION AS A CULTURAL LENS

## THE VETERANS/TRADITIONALISTS- 1922 TO 1944

- Like consistency and uniformity
- Conformers to traditional roles and hierarchies
- Disciplined and value a self-denial work ethic
- Past oriented and history absorbed
- Have faith in organizations and leaders
- Conservative spending style

## CORE VALUES

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| - DEDICATION/SACRIFICE  | - HARD WORK            |
| - CONFORMITY            | - LAW AND ORDER        |
| - RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY | - DUTY BEFORE PLEASURE |
| - PATIENCE              | - HONOR                |

# GENERATION AS A CULTURAL LENS

## Veterans/Traditionalists Theme Song

### "Those Were The Days"

Boy, the way Glen Miller played. Songs that made the hit parade.

Guys like us, we had it made. Those were the days.

Didn't need no welfare state. Everybody pulled his weight.

Gee, our old LaSalle ran great. Those were the days.

And you know who you were then, girls were girls and men were men.

Mister, we could use a man like Herbert Hoover again.

People seemed to be content. Fifty dollars paid the rent.

Freaks were in a circus tent. Those were the days.

Take a little Sunday spin, go to watch the Dodgers win.

Have yourself a dandy day costing under a fin. Those were the days.

Hair was short and skirts were long. Kate Smith really sold a song.

I don't know just what went wrong. Those Were The Days.

# THE VETERANS/TRADITIONALISTS - 1922 TO 1944

## Generational Issues: Myths and Truths

### MYTH

Have more accidents, sick more often

Can't learn new technology

Don't want to work

Not as productive as younger employees

Not as bright as young people



### TRUTH

Fewer on-the-job accidents, no difference in insurance claims

Are willing students when training is in format they are comfortable with

Many retirees prefer to be working

U.S. Dept. of HHS say older workers just as productive as younger ones

Psychologists find intelligence remains constant until at least 70

The material on myths and truths for each generation was adapted from Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace by Ron Zemke, Claire Raines and Bob Filipczak, Amacom, 2000.

# VETERANS/TRADITIONALS AT WORK

- **Take time to add personal touches**
- **Look for freedom to socialize, particularly between assigned tasks**
- **Honor their hard work with plaques and at symbolic stage**

# GENERATION AS A CULTURAL LENS

## THE BABY BOOMERS - 1945 TO 1964

- Believe in growth and expansion
- Value self-fulfillment and pursue own personal gratification
- Question traditional roles
- Question authority, but desire to hold higher ranks
- Big trendsetters, continuously morphing - hippies, yuppies, graying of the workforce - a lot of media focus -
- In school and at home learned about teamwork

## CORE VALUES

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| - OPTIMISM               | - TEAM ORIENTATION    |
| - PERSONAL GRATIFICATION | - HEALTH AND WELLNESS |
| - PERSONAL GROWTH        | - YOUTH               |
| - WORK                   | - INVOLVEMENT         |

# THE BABY BOOMERS - 1945 TO 1964

## Generational Issues: Myths and Truths

### MYTH

**Are on their way out**

**Will grow up**

**Always had it easy, assured of comfortable retirement**

**Have quit learning**

**Are workaholics**



### TRUTH

**Are expected to work longer than any previous generation**

**Sales of Harley-Davidson motorcycles doubled in early 90s, majority of buyers were Boomers**

**Of all generations Boomers have highest credit card debt, have an average of 20 years remaining on their mortgages, and started late saving for retirement**

**Boomers partly responsible for booming industry of adult education programs for everything from sushi making to economics**

**Have tended to work grueling hours for past 30 years, but have begun to slow their pace. Boomers are known as the most stressed generation in history and many are working less hours and trying to simplify their lives**

# **BABY BOOMERS AT WORK**

- **Seek to prove their worth**
- **Seek to be asked for their input and expertise.**
- **Seek to build consensus**
- **Look for public recognition and awards for their work ethic**
- **Look to receive perks in keeping with their professional status**
- **Look to build name recognition in the company through their projects and input.**

# GENERATION AS A CULTURAL LENS

## GENERATION X - 1965 TO 1979

- Self-reliant
- Seeking sense of family
- Nontraditional orientation about time and space
- Technologically savvy - have effectively dealt with what others think is information overload
- Approach to authority is casual
- Value flexibility and risk taking - see change as normal and desirable
- Survival instinct - loyalty is situational

## CORE VALUES

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| - DIVERSITY      | - FUN               |
| - INFORMALITY    | - THINKING GLOBALLY |
| - BALANCE        | - SELF-RELIANCE     |
| - TECHNOLITERACY | - PRAGMATISM        |

# GENERATION X – 1965 TO 1980

## Generational Issues: Myths and Truths

### MYTH

Are materialistic

Are whiners

Have a “you owe me” attitude

Not willing to work hard

Are living the easy life



### TRUTH

Many struggling to make ends meet. Gen X first generation that probably won't be able to replicate or improve on their parents' lifestyle. Worry about not having enough money to buy home etc. Tend to reject material wealth & status symbols.

They face many challenges - college loans, rising health care costs- but most remain philosophical about the problems they are inheriting

No more so than any other generation

Very willing to work hard, but don't want to be taken advantage of. Many think not fair to work a 70-hr week for 40-hrs of pay. Committed to having life outside of work

People over 60 can expect to get back about \$200 for every \$100 they put into Social Security. Gen Xers will lose over \$100 for every \$450 they contribute

# GENERATION X AT WORK

- Like lots of projects to prioritize as they see fit
- Look to receive regular constructive feedback
- Look to have time to pursue other interests
- Seek to have fun at work
- Look to work with latest computer technology
- Are conscious of perks higher up the ladder

# GENERATION AS A CULTURAL LENS

## GENERATION Y/NEXTERS- 1980 TO 2000

- Excited about working in teams
- Few feel supervising is an important career step
- Feel most important criteria for work is getting along with a widely diverse group
- High values on helping others
- Conservative of traditions like marriage and family

## CURRENT CORE VALUES

- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| - OPTIMISM    | - SOCIABILITY   |
| - CIVIC DUTY  | - MORALITY      |
| - CONFIDENCE  | - STREET SMARTS |
| - ACHIEVEMENT | - DIVERSITY     |

# GENERATION NEXT/Y - 1980 TO 2000

## Generational Issues: Myths and Truths

### MYTH

Today's kids are getting a great education



Need to spend more time reading and less time watching TV and playing video games

Kids today have no morals

### TRUTH

Not all of them. Gap and disparity between the haves and the have-nots has grown. More Nexters grew up in affluence, but more also grew up in poverty, with the middle class shrinking. Students living in poverty not having access to technology is a huge problem

Kids are spending more time reading than previous generations. Study found that playing video games cuts into TV time not reading time

Many Nexters have shown a return to traditional moral values. Nexters shown to be better educated about topics like pregnancy and AIDS. They have so far shown to be less promiscuous than Baby Boomers & Gen Xers.

# GENERATION Y AT WORK

- **You be the leader**
- **Challenge me**
- **Let me work with friends**
- **Let's have fun**
- **Respect me**
- **Be flexible**

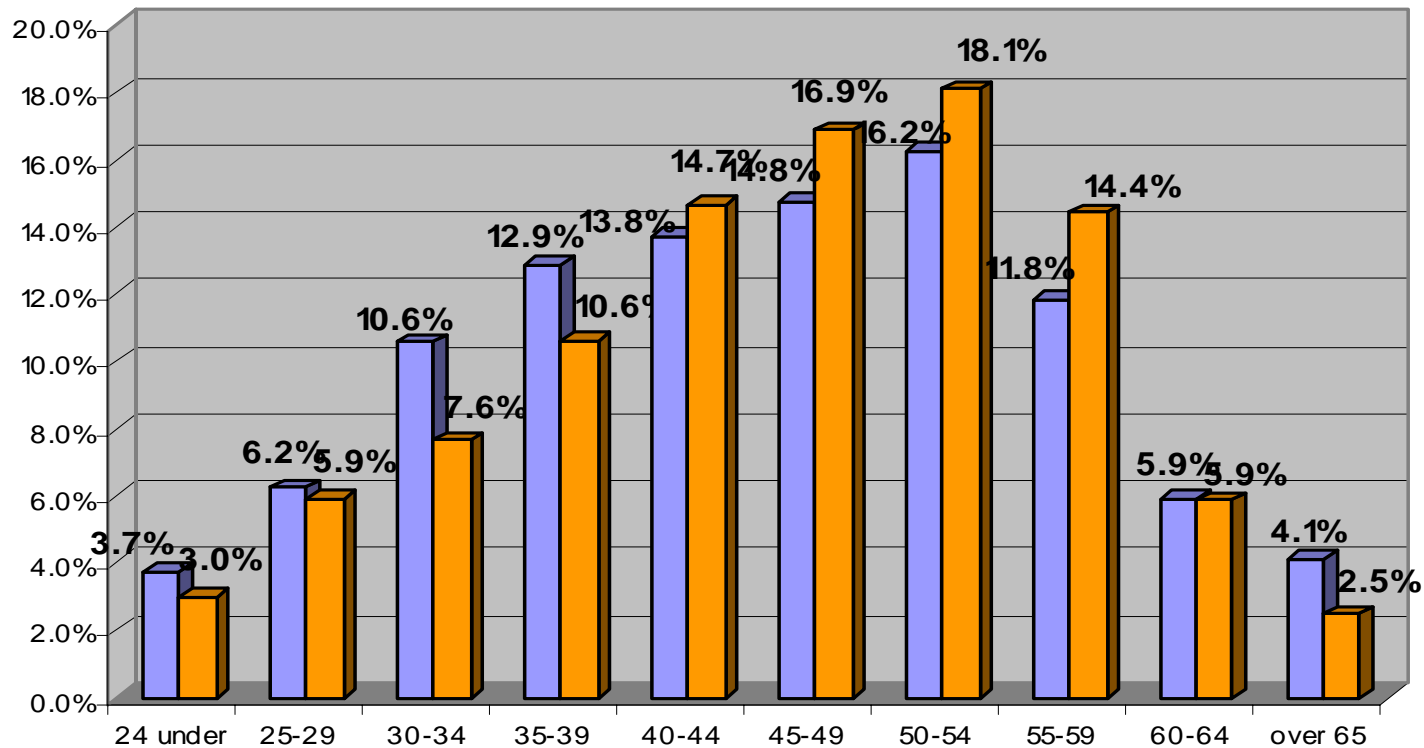
# **EXERCISE**

## **DEFINING THE GENERATIONS**

# DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

**CURRENT AGE GROUP PROPORTIONS IN FEDERAL WORKFORCE (FY 2005)**

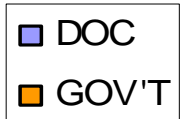
Sources: OPM Fedscope



**# of Gov't Employees**  
FY 2005 1,860,949

AGE GROUPS

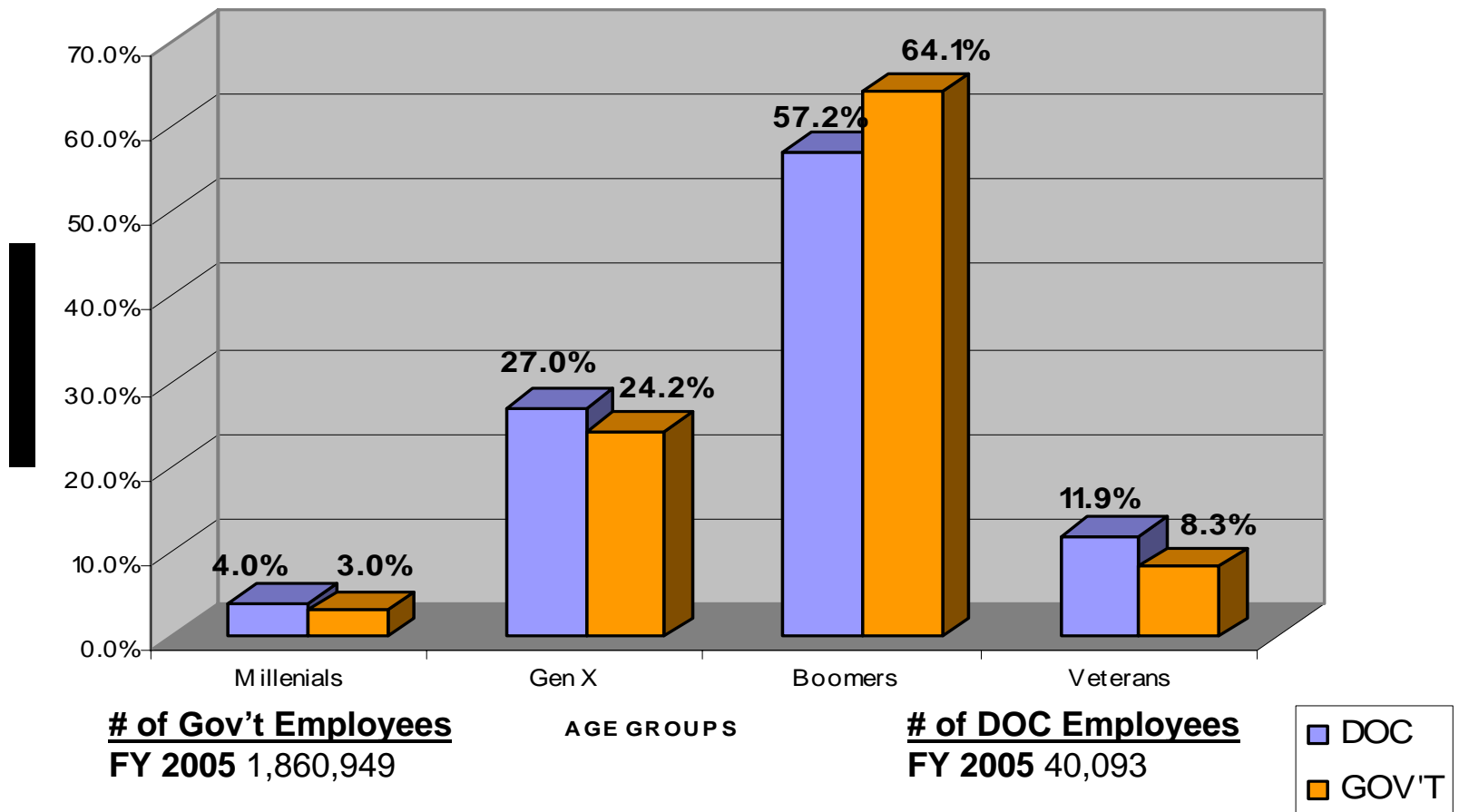
**# of DOC Employees**  
FY 2005 40,093



# DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

**CURRENT AGE GROUP PROPORTIONS IN FEDERAL WORKFORCE (FY 2005)**

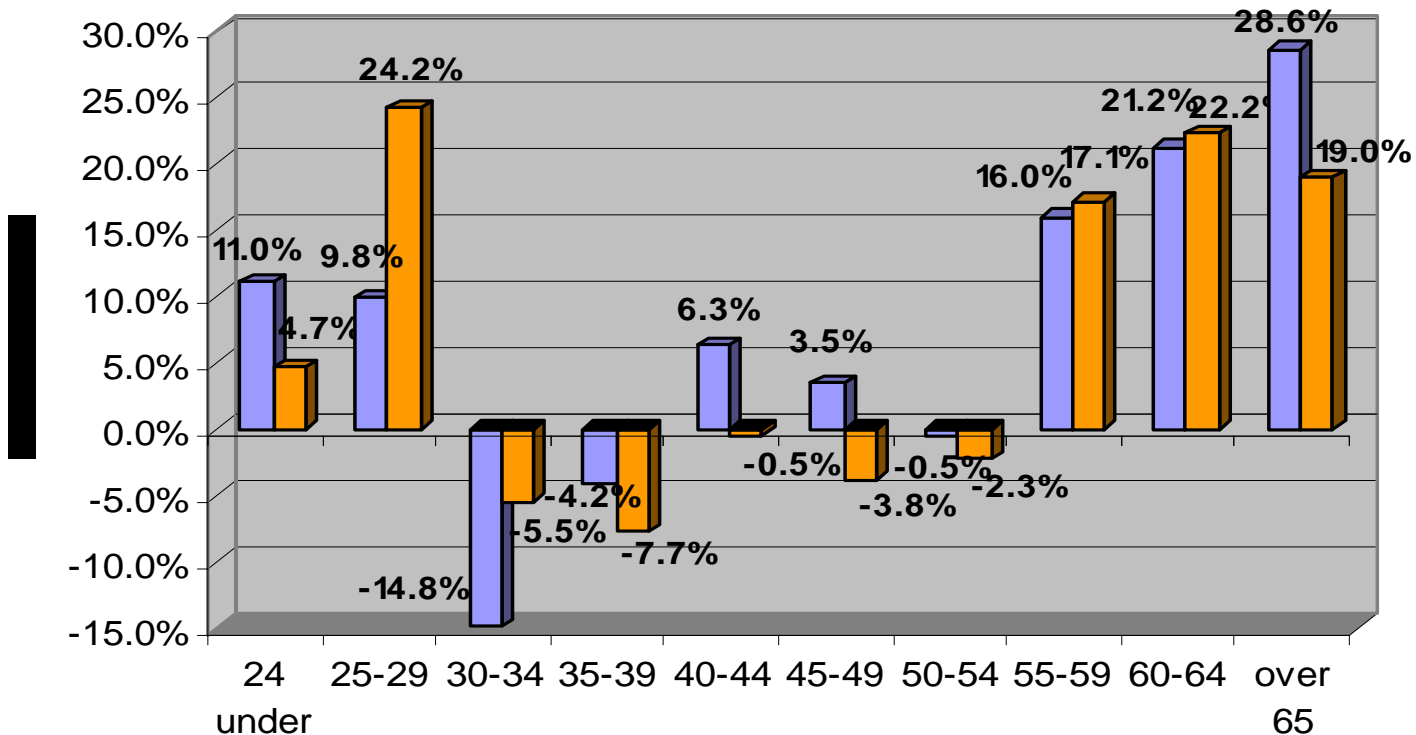
Sources: OPM Fedscope



# DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

**PERCENT CHANGE IN AGE GROUPS OF FEDERAL WORKFORCE**  
(between FY 02 & 05)

Sources: OPM Fedscope



**# of Gov't Employees**

**FY 2002** 1,819,107

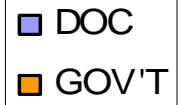
**FY 2005** 1,860,949

AGE GROUPS

**# of DOC Employees**

**FY 2002** 38,359

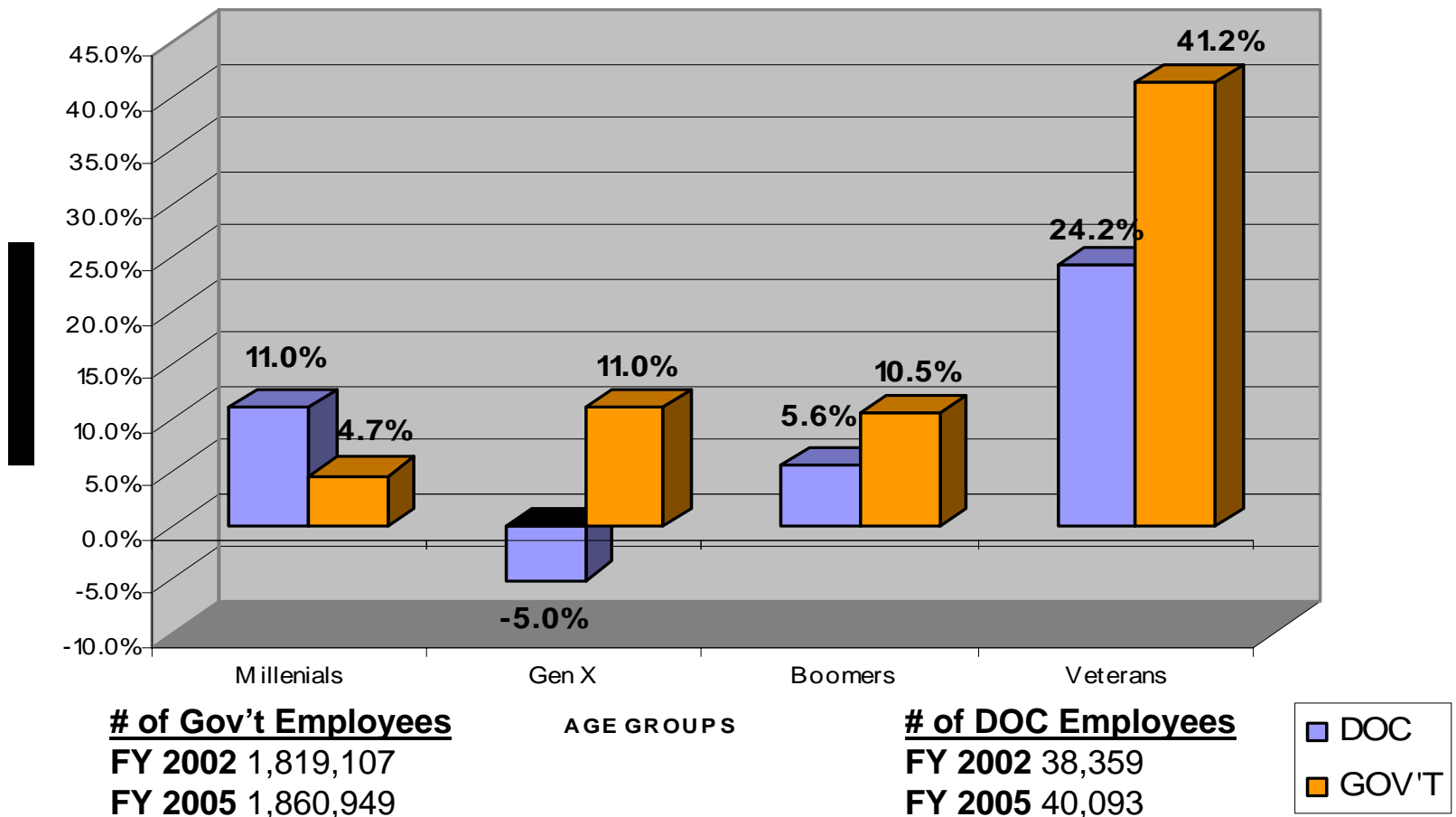
**FY 2005** 40,093



# DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

GENERATIONAL PERCENT CHANGE IN FEDERAL WORKFORCE (FY 2002 vs. 2005)

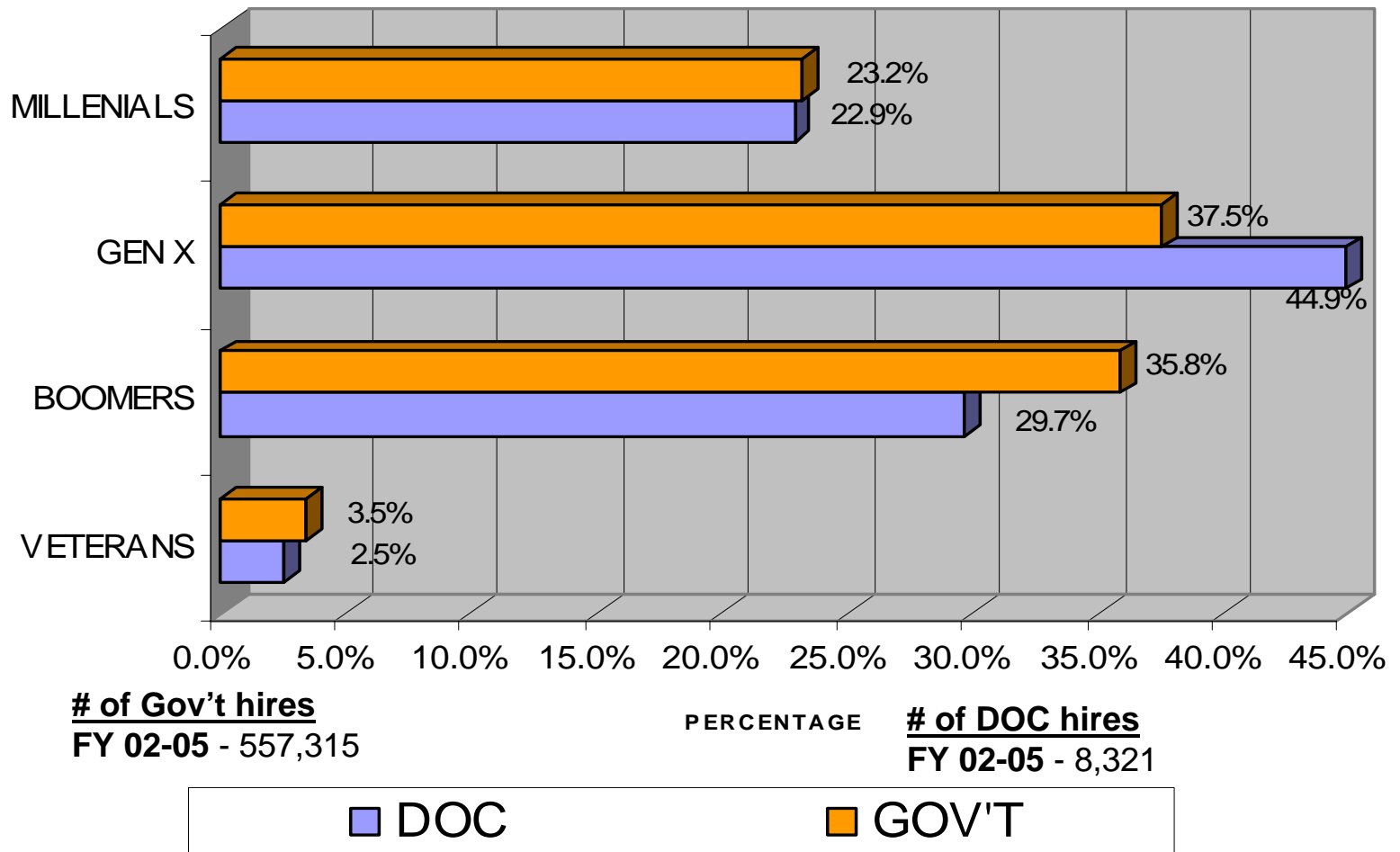
Sources: OPM Fedscope



# DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

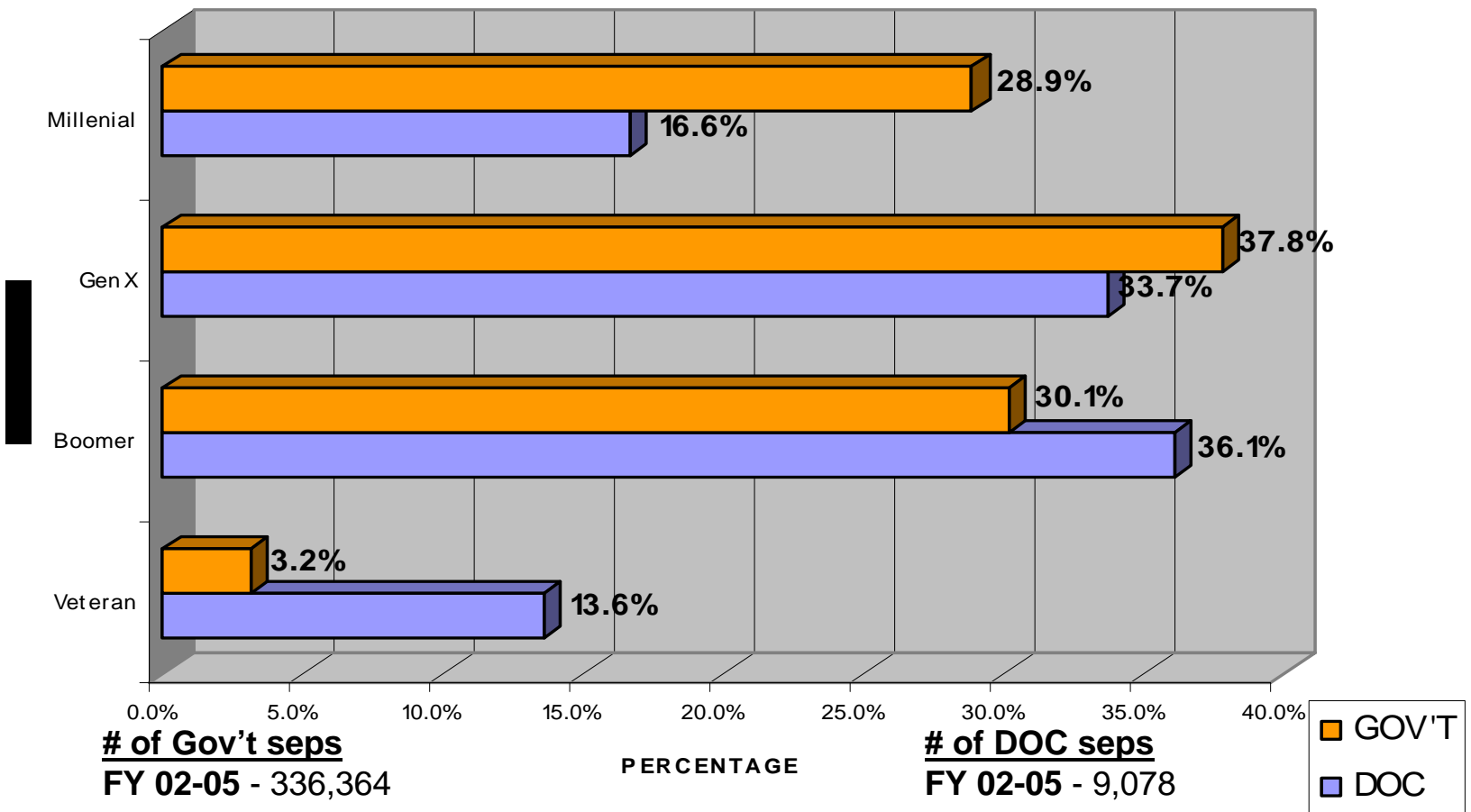
**GENERATIONAL HIRING PROPORTIONS GOVERNMENT vs DOC (FY 2002- 2005)**

Sources: OPM Fedscope



# DOC vs. GOVERNMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

**GENERATIONAL SEPARATION PROPORTIONS GOVERNMENT VS. DOC (FY 2002 to 2005)**  
**Sources: OPM Fedscope**



# GENERATIONAL CORE VALUE CLASHES

## VETERANS

DUTY BEFORE PLEASURE  
DEDICATION/SACRIFICE  
PATIENCE  
HARD WORK  
CONFORMITY  
LAW AND ORDER  
RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY  
HONOR

## BABY BOOMERS

PERSONAL GRATIFICATION  
TEAM ORIENTATION  
OPTIMISM  
WORK  
PERSONAL GROWTH  
CHALLENGE AUTHORITY  
HEALTH AND WELLNESS/YOUTH  
INVOLVEMENT

## GENERATION X

DIVERSITY  
FUN  
INFORMALITY  
THINKING GLOBALLY  
BALANCE  
SELF-RELIANCE  
TECHNOLITERACY  
PRAGMATISM

## NEXTERS/MILLENNIALS/GEN Y

DIVERSITY  
CIVIC DUTY  
OPTIMISM  
SOCIABILITY  
MORALITY  
CONFIDENCE  
STREET SMARTS  
ACHIEVEMENT

# VALUES INFORM ORGANIZATION CULTURE

## **How the generations are viewed...**

- One-third of respondents said they were often offended by someone from another generation at work.
- **24% of Traditionalists, 30% of Baby Boomers, and more than 60% of Xers said their generation is not viewed positively by the other generations.**
- When asked which generation they felt most comfortable managing only 14% chose Generation X, and this included the Xers themselves!

## **Employees are dissatisfied...**

- **One-third of Gen Xers said that for them to stay another two years in their job either "hell would have to freeze over" or "there would have to be major changes made."**
- 43% of Boomers said they lack opportunities to be mentored where they work, and, 30% of Boomers said that not having a mentor contributes to their job dissatisfaction.
- 40% of Traditionalists said their company does a poor job of making them want to stay.

## **Feedback is challenging...**

- **90% of Xers said they want feedback immediately or within a few days, but almost 30% of Xers said they receive their phone bill more often than they get relevant feedback!**
- 50% of all respondents said they had ever received any training in how to give feedback.

# VALUES INFORM ORGANIZATION CULTURE

## *Loyalties are different...*

- **40% of Xers said having a mentor directly influenced their decision to stay at their current company.**
- When asked who they are most loyal to at work, Xers put co-workers first, their boss or projects second, and the company last.
- **Xers' number one reason to stay was "autonomy."**
- Boomers' number one reason for staying was "making a difference."
- Traditionalists' number one reason for staying was "loyalty to clients and customers."
- **70% of Traditionalists said that a "lifetime career" with one company was a good goal, while only 35% of Boomers and a mere 17% of Generation Xers agreed.**
- The majority of Boomers said it would be easier for them to recite the ingredients in a Big Mac than their company's mission statement!

## *Training is an issue...*

- 45% of Boomers and 48% of Traditionalists agreed that "training opportunities play a role in my staying at my company."
- **When asked, "Have you ever left a job because of a lack of training opportunities?" only 3% of Traditionalists said "yes" compared to 15% of Boomers and 30% of Xers!**

# VALUES INFORM ORGANIZATION CULTURE

## **Career paths are important...**

- 60% of Traditionalists said they do not have a clearly defined career path where they work.
- **When asked what activities convinced them that their company is concerned about their career development, 31% of Traditionalists said "they don't seem to care." Yet, when asked what they are likely to do when they formally retire, 73% of Traditionalists said they planned to continue working in some capacity.**
- When asked if they would feel comfortable talking with their manager about a different career track within the company," one-third of Traditionalists said "no."

## **Balance and fairness are issues...**

- **When asked "Which generation is the best at finding work/life balance?" all three generations picked Gen X.**
- Over half of respondents agreed that, "when it comes to compensation and benefits where I work, we have issues about fairness."
- Twice as many Traditionalists felt that employees' needs for balance are not handled with fairness as Boomers or Xers.

# The Gamer Generation – A New Discovery

- Identified as members of generation X & Y
- Researched based on a two-year study by (Baby Boomers)

## GENERAL BELIEF AMONGST GAMERS

- Are confident about their abilities
- Prefer to be paid according to their actual performance, rather than a title or a set salary
- Believe connecting with the right people gets things done faster



# The Gamer Generation – A New Discovery

- Who are Gamers?:
  - 80% of managers under the age of 34 have significant video game experience
  - 40% of Gamers are women
  - The Gamer Generation is larger than the Baby Boom generation (90 million vs 77 million)

# The Gamer Generation – A New Discovery

## **Gamers at Work:**

- Strive for excellence and believe winning matters
- Believe in learning by “trial and error”
- Value heroism and making a difference

## **– Games have taught this generation:**

- You are the star
- You are the boss
- You are the customer
- You are an expert
- You need the help of others to succeed

The mind of a gamer is mapped in a way where they naturally think of all sides to an issue

# The Gamer Generation – A New Discovery

## What to Expect from Gamers as Leaders:

- Prefer a balanced leadership style
- Global thinkers
- Different learning style
- Relentless drive to make things better
- Comfortable with flexible organizations
- Rational embrace of risk

# GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

## VETERANS

No news is  
good news

## BOOMERS

Once a year with  
a lot of  
documentation

## FEEDBACK

## GEN-X

Sorry to interrupt, but  
how am I doing?

## ECHO BOOMERS

Feedback is  
available at the  
push of a button

# GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

**VETERANS**

**Respect it**

**BOOMERS**

**Crave it**

**POSITION POWER**

**GEN-X**

**Unimpressed**

**ECHO BOOMERS**

**Polite**

# GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

**VETERANS**

**Trust  
hierarchy**

**BOOMERS**

**Want  
Consensus**

**LEADERSHIP**

**GEN-X**

**Value competence**

**ECHO BOOMERS**

**Pulling  
together**

# GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

## VETERANS

Hardworking, but  
not a compulsion

## BOOMERS

Career and  
company first

## WORK-FAMILY BALANCE

## GEN-X

Seek equal balance

## ECHO BOOMERS

Hardworking, but  
not a compulsion

# GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

**VETERANS**

**Prize honor**

**BOOMERS**

**Covet status**

**PERKS**

**GEN-X**

**Disdain Vets' and  
Boomers' views**

**ECHO BOOMERS**

**Prize Sociability**

# GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

**VETERANS**

**High priority**

**BOOMERS**

**High priority**

**INTERPERSONAL  
SKILLS**

**GEN-X**

**Low priority**

**ECHO BOOMERS**

**High priority**

# GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

**VETERANS**

**See no point**

**BOOMERS**

**See the point**

**POLITICAL  
SAVVY**

**GEN-X**

**See no point**

**ECHO BOOMERS**

**See no point**

# GENERATIONAL CLASHES AT WORK

**VETERANS**

**Very wary**

**BOOMERS**

**Some what  
wary**

**CHANGE  
MANAGEMENT**

**GEN-X**

**See as inevitable**

**ECHO BOOMERS**

**See as inevitable**

# What you can do to motivate individuals from different generations

## **Veterans**

- Emphasize your belief and trust in them to “complete their duty”.
- Acknowledge their specific history in your organizations, and the skills they bring to a project and what their contributions has been to your organization

## **Baby Boomers**

- Praise them in public for the work they have completed
- Give them a chance to prove themselves and their worth
- Give them perks
- Invoke the personal approach (“I really need you to do this for me.”)
- Get consensus. Boomers often believe they invented participative management, and they can be mightily offended when you don’t involve them
- Give them opportunities to build consensus

# What you can do to motivate individuals from different generations

## **Generation X**

- Encourage creativity
- Commit yourself to providing feedback (both positive and negative)
- Encourage Xers pursuit of other interests (not directly related to their job)
- Provide state-of-the-art resources: Encourage utilization of technology

## **Generation Y**

- Promote in-house education and training
- Encourage autonomy, diversity, communications , teamwork, openness to ideas, and respect.
- Act like a coach
- Offer challenging assignments
- Provide state-of-the-art resources - Encourage utilization of technology
- Keep up with their pace -- Fast-paced communication is key to keep their interest.
- Involve them in a partnership -- Solicit their ideas and contributions, and work with them as a team.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

## In the Workplace...

- Which generation are you a part of (Traditionalist, Baby Boomer, Generation X, Millennial, or Cusper)?
- Which generation is most dominant in your workplace?
- Where is your organization the most generationally unbalanced?
- How does this create problems or opportunities?
- Where/how do the generations collide most often where you work (recruiting, retention, communication, rewards, training, work ethic, loyalty, favoritism)?
- What is the best way to bring the generations together at work?
- Do you ever experience gaps with your own generation?
- Where do you see the positives of a multigenerational culture where you work?
- What do you most wish the other generations could appreciate about your generation?
- Which generation do you admire, and why?
- What concerns you most about the other generations?
- How have you successfully bridged a generation gap?
- What bothers you about your own generation?
- Are you doing anything to change that?

# NEXT STEPS

- Identify the “generational make-up” of your team
- Identify actions you can take to motivate your team
- Identify actions or programs you can put into place or actions you can promote that will encourage others to join your team
- Take action yourself
- Measure your success
- Re-evaluate your actions and continue to encourage your workforce by addressing generational differences



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